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Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

Effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly the report of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies on their sixteenth meeting, held at Geneva from 23 to 25 June 2004, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/202 of 18 December 2002.

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Report of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies on their sixteenth meeting

Summary

The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/202, requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly the reports of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies on their periodic meetings. The present document contains the report of the sixteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies; the report of the fifteenth meeting was submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session (A/58/350).

The sixteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies was convened in Geneva from 23 to 25 June 2004, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/178 of 23 December 1994. The chairpersons considered follow-up to the recommendations of the fifteenth meeting and reviewed developments relating to the work of the treaty bodies. They also considered draft guidelines on an expanded core document and treaty-specific targeted reports and harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties. The chairpersons met with representatives of the specialized agencies and United Nations departments, funds and programmes, with representatives of States parties and with members of the Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights, including the Chairperson. The sixth joint meeting of treaty body chairpersons, special rapporteurs/representatives, independent experts and chairpersons of working groups of the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights, which included a meeting with the Chairperson of the Board of the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation, was also held. The chairpersons adopted recommendations, which are contained in section IX of the present report. The report of the third inter-committee meeting of human rights treaty bodies (Geneva, 21 and 22 June 2004), which was considered by the chairpersons, appears in annex I to the present report.

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I. Introduction

1. The sixteenth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies, convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/178, was held at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva from 23 to 25 June 2004. The meeting was preceded by the third inter-committee meeting, held on 21 and 22 June 2004.

II. Organization of the meeting

2. The following chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies attended: Ms. Feride Acar, Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Mr. Abdelfattah Amor, Chairperson of the Human Rights Committee (HRC); Ms. Virginia Bonoan-Dandan, Chairperson of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR); Mr. Jakob E. Doek, Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC); Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam, Chairperson of the Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW); Mr. Fernando Mariño Menendez, Chairperson of the Committee against Torture (CAT); and Mr. Mario Jorge Yutzis, Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

3. The meeting was opened by Mr. Doek, the Chairperson of the fifteenth meeting of chairpersons, on 23 June 2004.

4. Mr. Kariyawasam was elected Chairperson-Rapporteur of the meeting, and Mr. Mariño Vice-Chairperson. The chairpersons adopted the proposed agenda (HRI/MC/2004/1) and programme of work.

III. Streamlining of working methods: review of recent developments relating to the work of the treaty bodies

5. Mr. Kariyawasam, in his capacity as CMW Chairperson, outlined the results of the first session of his Committee which had met in Geneva from 1 to 5 March 2004. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families entered into force on 1 July 2003, and had 25 States parties, most of which could be classified as "sending countries". Twenty-three States parties were required to submit their initial reports by July 2004 but, in light of the efforts to streamline working methods and harmonize the reporting guidelines of treaty bodies, the Committee had deferred adoption of reporting guidelines until after the third inter-committee meeting while at the same time stressing that States were not released from their reporting obligations. The Committee had adopted provisional rules of procedure, and decided that the members should adopt, informally, an advocacy role to promote ratification of the Convention. The Chairperson requested the support and assistance of the other treaty bodies in this respect.

6. Ms. Acar provided information on the informal meeting of CEDAW, convened in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in May 2004, with the support of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights, to discuss working methods. She noted that the Committee's success in encouraging reporting by the Convention's 177 States

parties, especially by States whose reports had been long overdue, had resulted in a backlog of unconsidered reports. The Committee's workload had further increased as it began receiving its first individual communications under the Convention's Optional Protocol, which also set up an inquiry procedure. The Convention provided that the Committee would meet for two annual sessions of two weeks only, although its sessions currently extended to three weeks pursuant to a General Assembly resolution of 1996. The informal meeting considered ways of addressing the workload, including the option of meeting in parallel groups. While no consensus had been reached, the Committee decided to request the General Assembly to provide an additional week of meeting time for its July 2005 and two 2006 sessions, and that, as from 2007, it should meet in three annual sessions of three weeks, each preceded by a one-week pre-sessional working group. The meeting approved amendments to working methods, including standardized treatment of initial and periodic reports, with all reports being considered in two meetings instead of three, after the pre-sessional working group had drawn up lists of issues for the States. The role of the country rapporteurs would be strengthened: in addition to taking the lead in identifying issues to be reflected in concluding comments, they would have responsibility to brief the Committee on both initial and periodic reports. The idea of a country task force to lead the dialogue with States had been welcomed in principle and would be tested at the next session. Consideration in the absence of a report of States parties with long-overdue reports was approved as a measure of last resort, and the Secretariat was asked to provide the Committee with a list of States with long-overdue reports to be considered for this procedure. The decisions of the meeting would be formally adopted at the next Committee session in July 2004.

7. Mr. Doek drew attention to the decision by CRC to meet in two parallel chambers, noting that the Committee gave the highest priority to the constructive dialogue with States and follow-up to its concluding observations. There was a two-year backlog of reports awaiting consideration, which Mr. Doek considered threatened the credibility of the treaty monitoring system and tacitly invited non-reporting, and the second periodic reports of approximately 100 States were overdue (10-20 of them for more than five years). Reports on the implementation of the two Optional Protocols to the Convention would soon be submitted by States parties, adding to the workload. In the light of its workload, the Committee had no capacity to implement additional procedures to follow-up on concluding observations. The two-chambers proposal, which would allow the Committee to increase its working capacity without increasing the number of annual sessions, would be considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. It was hoped that further workshops would build on the success of the regional workshop on the implementation of the concluding observations of the Committee held in Damascus in December 2003. Mr. Doek reported that he, another member of the Committee and its Secretary had visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in April 2004, immediately before the consideration of the report of that State, and similar missions were planned.

8. Mr. Mariño stated that CAT had requested that its autumn session be extended by one week. Procedures to encourage reporting had been adopted in view of the high number of overdue initial reports, and some States had submitted reports following the Committee's requests. Implementation in States that persistently failed to report would be considered in the absence of a report. The Committee planned to formulate general comments and hold thematic debates on issues related to torture

and inhuman treatment in which members of other Committees could be invited to participate. An exchange of views with members of other committees on the interpretation of provisions of the Convention in the light of the other human rights treaties and other international standards would also be encouraged.

9. Mr. Yutzis noted that CERD faced obstacles similar to those faced by the other treaty bodies, especially with regard to non-reporting. Of the backlog of reports overdue, one third had been overdue for more than five years and six reports were more than 20 years overdue. The "review procedure" (under which a country is considered in the absence of its report) had motivated several States parties to produce reports. The explicit appeal to States to make a declaration under article 14 accepting the Committee's competence to receive communications and to remove reservations to the Convention, made in the Durban Programme of Action (A/CONF.189/12, Chap. I, Programme of Action, para. 75) had attracted little response: only 45 of the Convention's 136 States parties had accepted article 14. In the context of early warning and prevention, Mr. Yutzis suggested that the treaty bodies should develop forward-looking mechanisms to assist each other in detecting and alerting others to potential conflicts. He also encouraged members of other treaty bodies to participate in thematic debates as they often concerned issues which cut across the different treaties.

10. Ms. Bonoan-Dandan noted that CESCR had implemented the practice of drafting lists of issues since 1991, with country rapporteurs drafting the initial list which was revised and adopted during the pre-sessional working group. Lists of issues included a note to the State party stating that the list was not exhaustive and that other issues might be raised, and requesting that written replies be submitted in time to allow for translation. The Committee had limited the number of questions for initial and periodic reports so as not to overburden States. The problem of delegations that failed to attend sessions at which their reports were scheduled for consideration was highlighted, as was the Committee's policy of not granting last-minute requests for postponement of consideration of reports and considering the report in the absence of a delegation, since last-minute postponement disrupted the Committee's work. The Committee had well-developed procedures to allow for participation by non-governmental organizations (NGOs): since 1993 NGOs had met with the Committee in an open meeting with interpretation on the first afternoon of each session and the Committee had issued guidelines on the nature of the input from NGOs. The Committee's cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) within the Joint Expert Group (JEG) on the right to education was developing: the group had met twice, and members of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations of the UNESCO Executive Board had observed CESCR at work. The Committee was also exploring the possibility of establishing a JEG on labour rights with another specialized agency. A general discussion on article 6 (right to work) had been held and a general comment was being drafted. The draft general comment on article 3 (equality between men and women) would be adopted in the autumn.

11. Mr. Amor stated that the procedures of HRC to deal with non-reporting had proven satisfactory with the Committee considering the human rights situation in non-reporting States in the absence of a report or delegation. Country task forces, which took the lead in the examination of individual State party's reports, ensured the effective use of time. The quantity of individual communications received by the Committee had obvious implications for its workload and members were concerned

that, whilst criticizing States that were late in reporting, the Committee itself was tardy. Mr. Amor underlined the important role played by the treaty bodies in the development of jurisprudence, drawing attention to the Committee's general comment No. 31 (2004) on the nature of the general legal obligation imposed on States parties to the Covenant.

12. Mr. Doek noted that the jurisprudence of CRC was relatively unknown and underused. The clear congruence that existed between many of the provisions of the treaties meant that the jurisprudence of each treaty body should be taken into account by other treaty bodies, as well as other bodies, and the Secretariat was urged to introduce measures to make the corpus of jurisprudence, and related commentaries, readily available.

IV. Dialogue with members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

13. The Chairperson welcomed members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, who attended the meeting as observers. Commissioner Rezag-Bara introduced the African system for the protection of human rights, based on the 1981 African Charter ratified by all 53 African States without reservation. The activities of the Commission were similar to those of the treaty bodies, and included the consideration of States parties' reports and individual communications. The Commission was considering procedures to follow-up their recommendations at the national level and had created a number of special rapporteurs on human rights defenders, detention, women's rights, refugees and displaced persons and a working group on indigenous persons. Thirty States in the region had national human rights institutions and the Commission had developed close links with these bodies, while 300 NGOs had observer status with the Commission. The Protocol creating an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights had entered into force on 24 January 2004, and the Court, whose work would be complementary to that of the Commission, was currently being established. Commissioner Rezag-Bara drew attention to a number of other African initiatives, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative that sets up a system of voluntary peer review.

14. The chairpersons underlined the importance of regional mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, regretting that such a system did not exist in Asia, emphasized the value of cooperation with other regional bodies and systems and looked forward to further exchanges with the African Commission. They agreed that a letter expressing gratitude for the attendance of the commissioners and supporting the work of the Commission would be transmitted to the Commission by the chairpersons.

V. Cooperation with the specialized agencies and United Nations departments, funds and programmes

15. The representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) welcomed efforts to enhance the treaty bodies' work, noting that the draft harmonized reporting guidelines were a good starting point. The value of identifying

commonalities among the treaties was highlighted, but it was noted that a focus on children was critical, and child-specific elements of the general information requested in the core document should not be lost. The strength of reporting lay in the processes involved in the preparation of reports, which brought together different partners, an element that should not be lost in the revised reporting system. The value of input to treaty bodies from the country level, as opposed to headquarters level, could not be overstated.

16. The representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasized its interaction with most of the treaty bodies and looked forward to close collaboration with the CMW, particularly as the recently concluded International Labour Conference had a general discussion on migration and employment. There was mutual interest in making the process of collaboration with the treaty bodies efficient and productive. The ILO Committee of Experts had collaborated with CESCR on the draft general comment on the right to work, and would continue to provide written input to treaty bodies where their work intersected with that of ILO. However, specialized agencies needed to be sure that their participation was mutually beneficial and further reflection was required on ways of rights-based programming for development within the context of action 2 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387 and Corr.1), which aimed at strengthening United Nations human rights-related actions at the country level.

17. The representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), highlighting the multifaceted linkages between refugee issues and human rights, noted that the Executive Committee of the UNHCR had recently strengthened its normative framework for cooperation (conclusion No. 95 (LIV)). He welcomed cooperation on drafting general comments and participation in thematic debates. He observed that a number of issues raised by UNHCR, in particular the challenge of consistency in the examination of reports, had been taken up by treaty bodies and called for further efforts to harmonize working methods. The decision that each committee would appoint a focal point for cooperation with United Nations entities was welcomed. He supported the approach of the draft reporting guidelines, stressed the need for complementary guidelines on the treaty-specific documents and looked forward to close involvement in their further development. The activities to implement action 2 were strongly supported.

18. The representative of the Department of Public Information of the secretariat noted that, despite public interest in human rights issues, there were few editorials on the work of the committees and coverage was limited and often superficial, in particular in the local press. Dissemination of information was faster, but problems of substance remained, and there were limited funds for coverage of human rights. She suggested the adoption of a promotional approach to cover major issues of concern so as foster awareness of the work of the committees in the international community. She welcomed the decision of the third inter-committee meeting that treaty bodies appoint a liaison point with the Department to ensure the accuracy of press releases and that these should bear a disclaimer.

19. The representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) noted the common aims of CMW and IOM in promoting the rights of migrants and highlighted the role of IOM in advocating ratification of the Convention. She also emphasized the commitment of IOM to working with other treaty bodies on migration issues.

20. The representative of UNESCO noted that the core mandate of her organization, "Education for All", complemented the work of many of the treaty bodies and committed UNESCO to enhanced cooperation. She noted that the draft convention on cultural diversity currently under consideration and the UNESCO strategy on human rights and gender equality was being finalized.

21. The representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the Organization's efforts to support its member States in reporting and implementing concluding observations relevant to health. Such efforts include capacity-building of multi-stakeholders at regional and country level. The structure of the guidelines for the core document was satisfactory, but common principles such as non-discrimination should also be considered with regard to each treaty provision. Harmonization of the working methods of the committees was crucial, including standardizing terminology relating to the technical elements of their work and consistent follow-up of concluding observations among the committees. Further coordination among various national stakeholders should be encouraged.

22. The Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Anders Johnsson, provided examples of parliamentary hearings which reviewed Governments' submissions to treaty bodies, and called for greater cooperation between parliaments and the committees. IPU encouraged parliaments to work for the implementation of treaty body recommendations. The number of parliamentary committees with a human rights mandate had increased in recent years, and IPU had invited the chairpersons of these committees to Geneva during the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights. A handbook for parliamentarians on human rights mechanisms was being prepared and other handbooks, including one on CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, had been published. The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians had dealt with over 1,000 cases of violations of the rights of parliamentarians in the 30 years since its establishment.

23. The chairpersons emphasized the important linkages and the complementarity between the work of the treaty bodies and United Nations entities and other bodies. They also underlined the importance of training the staff of United Nations entities in the treaty body system, as well as involving parliamentarians in the reporting process and follow-up to concluding observations.

VI. Cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

24. On 24 June 2004, the chairpersons met with the Expanded Bureau of the sixtieth session of the Commission and with a representative of the Chairperson of the fifty-fifth session of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro.

25. The Chairperson, Ambassador Mike Smith, welcomed the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the treaty bodies and acknowledged their increasing importance, and their efforts to improve their working methods. He affirmed the need to enhance communication and cooperation with the respective committees and noted that the chairpersons had been invited to address the sixtieth session of the Commission, although only three had been able to attend. He summarized the main

achievements of the sixtieth session and, in particular, the adoption of resolution 2004/78 on the effective implementation of international instruments on human rights.

26. Mr. Pinheiro described the outcome of the fifty-fifth session of the Sub-Commission, highlighting the appointment of new special rapporteurs and the identification of new subjects for investigation, and suggested possible ways of enhancing the interaction between the treaty bodies and the Sub-Commission, inter alia through joint discussions with the treaty bodies on issues of common concern during the annual sessions of the Sub-Commission.

27. In the ensuing discussion, the chairpersons and members of the Expanded Bureau addressed time management at the Commission, in particular the time allocated for statements made by the chairpersons. They underlined the need for the Commission to take into account the work of the treaty bodies so as to follow the progressive development of international human rights law, and suggested that informal dialogues between the Commission and the treaty bodies, as well as additional side events either for all or for specific treaty bodies, be convened.

VII. Sixth joint meeting of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders

28. On 23 June, the chairpersons held their sixth joint meeting, co-chaired by Mr. Theo van Boven (Chairperson of the meeting of special rapporteurs/ representatives, experts and chairpersons of working groups of the special procedures of the Commission of Human Rights) and Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam (Chairperson of the meeting of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies), with the special procedures mandate-holders.

29. For the first time, the joint meeting met with the Chairperson of the Board of the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, who indicated that assistance provided by the Fund could be used to encourage States to ratify treaties, to assist them to report and to implement substantive obligations at the national level. This was in line with the recommendations of the global review of the OHCHR technical cooperation programme, which suggested better coordination among the different fields of work carried out by OHCHR (i.e. technical cooperation, treaty bodies and special procedures). The Board considered that better communication of treaty body recommendations to the national level, country visits (especially for the follow-up of treaty body recommendations), and deepening the engagement of civil society (including NGOs and national human rights institutions) and specialized agencies in the reporting process and national implementation of the treaties were also priority concerns.

30. The practice of treaty bodies' suggesting, in their concluding observations, that States should seek technical assistance when implementing their treaty obligations and the committees' recommendations was welcomed, although it was suggested that the impact of such recommendations should be assessed. Mr. Hammarberg underlined the importance of creating opportunities for treaty body members to interact with United Nations field presences, as that would assist treaty bodies to

formulate recommendations in a way that was understood by donors and allowed field presences to encourage their implementation.

31. Chairpersons and special procedures mandate-holders encouraged the Chairperson of the Board of the Voluntary Fund to continue discussions in order to deepen their cooperation. Special mention was made of the potential for cooperation between the Board of the Fund and CMW in efforts to encourage ratification.

32. The joint meeting also took up the thematic issue of the impact of counter-terrorism measures on human rights. The Secretariat drew attention to the study requested by the General Assembly its resolution 58/187 on the extent to which the human rights special procedures and treaty monitoring bodies were able, within their existing mandates, to address the compatibility of national counter-terrorism measures with international human rights obligations. It was also noted that at its sixtieth session the Commission had decided to appoint an independent expert to examine the question of the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, and that the 2003 "Digest of Jurisprudence of the United Nations and Regional Organization on the Protection of Human Rights while Countering Terrorism" was being updated.

33. Several participants pointed out that counter-terrorism measures had far-reaching consequences for the work of most of the mandates present (both treaty bodies and special procedures mandate-holders). The study should identify those areas where collaborative reporting could be undertaken and propose comprehensive solutions (at country and at regional level) to include both the work of the treaty bodies and special procedures-mandate-holders.

34. The panoply of national and international human rights norms and standards should not be disregarded when addressing this issue. In particular, general comments No. 29 and No. 31 of the Human Rights Committee offered guidelines on the principle of proportionality and non-derogable rights. The non-derogable nature of the prohibition of torture and the principle of non-refoulement to a State where there were substantial grounds for believing that a person would be in danger of being subjected to torture were also highlighted.

35. The impact of counter-terrorism measures on vulnerable groups (such as children or migrants) required further consideration, in particular with regard to the enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights. Concern was also expressed with regard to the legitimization of discrimination vis-à-vis certain groups, in particular within the penal justice system. The use of anti-terrorism measures to suppress democracy movements or to justify human rights violations was condemned, as was the emerging practice of equating struggles for self-determination with terrorism.

36. It was recommended that treaty bodies and special procedures cooperate on this issue. Treaty bodies should continue to address the theme in their concluding observations and general comments, as well as in considering relevant individual communications. They should also deepen their collaboration with the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

VIII. Informal consultations with States parties

37. The sixteenth meeting of chairpersons held informal consultations with States on 24 June. Seventy-seven States participated in this meeting, as well as observers from the African Union and the European Commission. States welcomed the opportunity to provide input into the process of streamlining and harmonizing the working methods of the treaty bodies and reporting requirements. Although noting that it was for the treaty bodies themselves to lead the process, they encouraged further consultations as it developed.

38. The process of streamlining and harmonizing the working methods of the treaty bodies should strengthen and modernize the committees, but should not dilute their crucial role in the protection and promotion of human rights. States recognized the treaty bodies as the cornerstones of the human rights machinery, evidenced by the unanimous adoption by the Commission of resolution 2004/78, which should be used as a tool and reference point. In this context, the importance of treaty body activities being funded from the regular budget was stressed. The meetings of chairpersons and the inter-committee meetings were now regarded as an integral part of the human rights agenda and as forums for the treaty bodies to share best practices and increase cooperation.

39. Most States endorsed the draft reporting guidelines, considering them a good basis for continued efforts to streamline the functioning of the treaty bodies. The holistic approach to human rights reflected in the document could ensure coherence and closer cooperation across the treaty body system and avoid duplication and conflicting interpretations of human rights provisions. Such an approach would also assist in mainstreaming human rights across the United Nations system. It was important, however, to ensure that the specificity of the individual treaties was not diluted. Certain areas required clarification, including the length of the reporting cycle (and the period of validity of the core document) and the time-frame for the adoption of the guidelines for both the common core document and the treaty-specific documents. The particular situation of federal States should also be addressed. Concern was expressed as to the important organizational challenge, and possible burden, for States in preparing the common core document, especially with regard to data compilation. It was observed that some data and information requested by the guidelines might fall outside the human rights field, and reservations were expressed regarding the term "indicators". A practical simplified approach to reporting which did not add to the burden on States parties was called for and the importance of conducting a pilot study, particularly in developing countries, was underlined.

40. One State outlined a project currently under way to establish a "joint reporting system", for which an extended database was being crafted, with a view to producing reports through database technologies. A matrix to assist in collecting information was being prepared and would be provided to the Secretariat in autumn 2004. This State was also considering establishing a standing working committee to synchronize the preparation of reports.

41. With regard to working methods, States called on those committees which had not yet adopted follow-up procedures or introduced pre-sessional working groups to do so. Lists of issues were regarded as a means of focusing the preparation of delegations for the constructive dialogue with the committees. Being provided with

all of the materials submitted to the committees (such as reports from NGOs and specialized agencies) would also assist States. It was noted that consistency in working methods across treaty bodies would lead to better results, and that treaty bodies should consider ways of making constructive dialogue with States parties more interactive. The practice of annexing the comments of States parties to the concluding observations of committees was welcomed by one State.

42. The accuracy of press releases was a concern of several States, and chairpersons recalled the recommendation of the third inter-committee meeting by which all press releases should include a disclaimer stating that they did not constitute official records and which called upon all committees to appoint a focal point to ensure that they reflected the concluding observations. A maximum time period for treaty body mandate-holders was also proposed in order to ensure continuous renewal and development of treaty bodies. The approach of treaty bodies to reservations was raised by one State, while another underlined the importance of treaty bodies' providing input into the working group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

43. States encouraged treaty bodies to make their recommendations as concrete and detailed as possible in order for them to be of greater use to States, as well as to be able to be fed into the plans of action of United Nations country teams. Technical cooperation should be more readily available for States wishing to prepare reports or which request assistance for the follow-up to concluding observations. In this context, the growing practice of convening regional and subregional workshops to follow up concluding observations was welcomed. The potential for using new technologies to facilitate reporting was also raised.

44. States were sensitive to the challenges being faced by the treaty bodies, in particular in such areas as non-reporting and the backlogs being experienced by some treaty bodies. Creative and flexible thinking on how to reduce this backlog, such as the proposal that the Committee on the Rights of the Child sit in two chambers, was welcomed by several States.

IX. Decisions and recommendations

Adoption of the points of agreement of the inter-committee meeting

A. **The sixteenth meeting of chairpersons endorsed the points of agreement concluded at the third inter-committee meeting (annex, sect. VI). The chairpersons called upon the human rights treaty bodies to follow up on those recommendations and to report on their implementation at the seventeenth meeting in 2005.**

Technical cooperation

B. **The chairpersons called for greater opportunities for interaction with the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.**

C. **The chairpersons requested that the Secretariat review the impact of recommendations of the treaty bodies in their concluding observations/ comments calling for States to consider requesting technical assistance**

with respect to certain areas, in particular those relating to the preparation of reports required by the human rights treaties.

Jurisprudence of treaty bodies

D. **The chairpersons requested the Secretariat to consider means of presenting the corpus of treaty body jurisprudence in an accessible way, along with commentaries, to allow it to be used more effectively by all treaty bodies and others.**

Cooperation with special procedures mandate-holders

E. **The chairpersons, reiterating the inter-committee meeting (annex, para. 49), recommended that funds be made available to support the interaction of special procedures mandate-holders with the treaty bodies, including through attendance at sessions of treaty bodies.**

Cooperation with field presences

F. **The chairpersons recommended that consideration be given to providing a forum for representatives of OHCHR field presences to meet with the treaty bodies.**

Cooperation with United Nations agencies and other entities

G. **The chairpersons recommended that more time be allocated at the next meeting of chairpersons for dialogue with specialized agencies and other entities, in particular the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and that the discussions focus on best practices, difficulties and problems in the implementation of the concluding observations/comments, and ratification strategies.**

H. **The chairpersons recommended that United Nations country teams be encouraged to submit integrated country-specific input to the treaty bodies relating to the States whose reports are scheduled for consideration.**

I. **The chairpersons recommended that the United Nations partners work with States parties through technical cooperation programmes to improve the quality of reporting systems at the country level.**

Cooperation with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

J. **The chairpersons decided that a letter expressing support for the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and gratitude for the attendance of the commissioners would be transmitted to the Commission by the chairperson of the meeting on behalf of the chairpersons.**

Cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights

K. **Noting the point of agreement of the inter-committee meeting (annex, para. 48), the chairpersons recommended that further discussions be held with the Expanded Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights on**

modalities for constructive and interactive dialogue with the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies during the sixty-first session of the Commission. It entrusted its Chairperson to discuss this matter with the Expanded Bureau of the Commission in the course of the year.

NGO participation

L. **The chairpersons recommended that modalities for NGO participation in the work of the treaty bodies be considered at its next meeting and requested the Secretariat to prepare a background report on the practices of treaty bodies in this regard.**

Ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

M. **The chairpersons recommended that all treaty bodies actively promote ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families by States parties.**

Participation in the inter-committee meeting

N. **The chairpersons recommended that the treaty bodies nominate participants in the inter-committee meeting with due consideration for continuity in participation.**

Request for postponement of consideration of reports by States parties

O. **The chairpersons decided to include an item on the agenda of its next session on the approach to be taken by treaty bodies when States parties submit a last-minute request for postponement of the consideration of their reports, as well as when delegations do not attend to present reports as scheduled.**

Organization of future meetings

P. **The chairpersons decided that the agendas of the inter-committee meeting/meeting of chairpersons be prepared in an integrated way in consultation with the chairperson of the sixteenth meeting of chairpersons and be circulated to all chairpersons for comments.**

Q. **The chairpersons decided that the fourth inter-committee meeting would be convened for three days with the seventeenth meeting of chairpersons being convened for two days.**

Annex

Report of the third inter-committee meeting of human rights treaty bodies

(Geneva, 21 and 22 June 2004)

I. Introduction

1. The third inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies was held at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva on 21 and 22 June 2004, pursuant to the recommendation of the fifteenth meeting of the chairperson of the human rights treaty bodies that the inter-committee meeting should be convened annually, immediately prior to the annual meeting of chairpersons (A/58/350, para. 50).

2. The following members of human rights treaty bodies attended the meeting: Human Rights Committee (HRC): Mr. Abdelfattah Amor (Chairperson), Mr. Rafael Rivas Posada, Mr. Maxwell Yalden; Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR): Ms. Virginia Bonoan-Dandan (Chairperson), Ms. Maria Virginia Bras Gomes, Mr. Eibe Riedel; Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC): Mr. Jakob Egbert Doek (Chairperson); Mr. Kamel Filali, Ms. Nevena Vuckovic-Sahovic; Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): Ms. Feride Acar (Chairperson), Mr. Cees Flinterman; Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD): Mr. Mario Jorge Yutzis (Chairperson), Mr. Alexei S. Avtonomov, Ms. Patricia N. January-Bardill; Committee against Torture (CAT): Mr. Fernando Mariño Menendez (Chairperson), Mr. Sayed El Masry, Mr. Ole Vedel Rasmussen; Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW): Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam (Chairperson), Mr. Francisco Carrión-Mena, Mr. Arthur Gakwandi.

II. Opening of the meeting and election of officers

3. The meeting was opened by Mr. Bertrand Ramcharan, Acting United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who welcomed all members, including representatives of the new treaty body, CMW, and observers from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights whose presence would set the framework for close and fruitful collaboration between the African and international systems for the protection and promotion of human rights. The Acting High Commissioner reminded the participants of the strategic importance of the international human rights treaties and stressed the mutually reinforcing nature of each organ, as well as the importance of the treaty bodies' interaction with other parts of the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies, the Commission on Human Rights and the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee. Further harmonization of working methods of treaty bodies during the year, in particular with regard to list of issues and follow-up procedures, was welcomed. The Secretariat's efforts to strengthen the implementation of the concluding observations at the national level, including by reinforcing the capacity of national actors, were underlined. In this context, the global review of the OHCHR technical cooperation programme and the key role of treaty body recommendations

in the discussions were mentioned. The Acting High Commissioner reiterated the commitment of OHCHR to maintain a high standard of servicing for the treaty bodies and drew attention to the draft harmonized reporting guidelines presented for discussion to the inter-committee meeting, which were the result of a year-long effort and wide consultations by the Secretariat. The draft guidelines emphasized the role of the reporting process in providing a framework for national-level stocktaking, popular participation and constructive public scrutiny of implementation; they built upon the guidelines for the current core document but went further, calling for information concerning substantive provisions which were common to all or several treaties.

4. Mr. Kariyawasam was elected Chairperson-Rapporteur. Mr. Mariño was elected Vice-Chairperson. At the opening meeting, the participants adopted the agenda and programme of work (HRI/ICM/2004/1).

III. Strengthening the human rights treaty body system: harmonization of working methods and follow-up to the recommendations of the second inter-committee meeting and the fifteenth meeting of chairpersons

5. Mr. Doek, Chairperson of the second inter-committee meeting and the fifteenth meeting of chairpersons, commented on the report on the implementation of the recommendations of the second inter-committee meeting and of the fifteenth meeting of chairpersons (HRI/MC/2004/2). He noted with satisfaction the number of recommendations that had been implemented, including the adoption of lists of issues and the convening of pre-sessional working groups by most treaty bodies. In light of the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the second inter-committee meeting and the fifteenth meeting of chairpersons, the value of those meetings, and particularly the inter-committee meeting, was underlined and further opportunities to dialogue informally with the specialized agencies, States parties and other actors on strengthening the human rights treaty body system were encouraged.

6. Some participants considered that a number of previous recommendations had not been implemented and should remain on the agenda for the next meeting in 2005. The need for consistent policies and coordinated approaches was recognized, but the emphasis should not be on uniformity of working methods, but harmonization where it was necessary to improve efficiency and reduce contradictory practices.

List of issues and pre-sessional working groups

7. It was agreed that all committees should adopt lists of issues with regard to all reports of States parties. Members of CAT, which had used lists of issues for the first time at its session in May 2004, noted that this had been welcomed by States parties and, despite some challenges, the Committee intended to continue with the practice. Members of CEDAW indicated that the Committee planned to adopt list of issues for all reports and not only for periodic reports, as had been the case. Some participants highlighted the need for an agreed structure for lists of issues, which should incorporate updated statistical information, new developments since the

submission of the previous report and specific questions on matters of particular concern. These lists should be used to frame the constructive dialogue with the State party during the session, implying that the questions should be specific and non-adversarial. The Secretariat should assist with processing complex statistical information. Lists of issues should also systematically request information on steps taken to implement the last set of concluding observations of the relevant committee, where this information had not been included in the State party's report. Some discussions took place on whether answers to lists of issues should be written, when these answers should be submitted, whether they should be translated, whether they should be subject to page limitations, the procedure to be followed when States parties did not respond, and the status of information received from NGOs. There was also some discussion on the linkage between concluding observations, lists of issues, country task forces and the follow-up procedures being introduced by some committees.

Cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

8. In light of the experience of the chairpersons at the sixtieth session of the Commission, the participants considered how their interaction with the Commission could be enhanced and again suggested that they should be able to engage in an interactive dialogue with the Commission and that a proper amount of time be allocated to ensure meaningful interaction. Participants also emphasized the importance of collaboration with the Sub-Commission.

Cooperation with the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies

9. Participants placed a high value on input by specialized agencies, especially where information provided was country specific. Ways to encourage greater participation by representatives of the specialized agencies at the sessions of the treaty bodies were discussed. The practice of nominating a focal point from among the members of each treaty body to liaise with the specialized agencies was noted, but it was emphasized that the liaison's role should be clear.

Cooperation with special procedure mandate-holders

10. Cooperation with special procedures was considered to enhance the work of the treaty bodies, and it was recommended that funds be secured to facilitate a real dialogue between the special procedures and the treaty bodies during sessions of treaty bodies, and that a mechanism be created to ensure the systematic exchange of written information between the treaty bodies and special procedures.

Press releases

11. Although increased collaboration by the Department of Public Information was noted, difficulties with some press releases remained and ways of ensuring the accuracy of press releases were discussed. The press releases should bear a disclaimer indicating that they were not an official record.

Role of national human rights institutions

12. In light of the important role played by national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in encouraging States to report, as well as in monitoring the

implementation of concluding observations, the establishment of well-functioning and independent NHRIs was encouraged. In order to enhance the participation of NHRIs in the treaty body system, it was suggested that during the next inter-committee meeting, representatives of NHRIs from different countries be invited to make a presentation on their best practices with respect to the treaty body system.

Capacity-building and technical assistance

13. Participants noted that, although technical assistance should be provided, as far as possible, to States committed to preparing their reports, it should also be available to strengthen their capacities to implement the various human rights treaties. Capacity-building should also focus on the establishment of a structure within the State system to coordinate, evaluate and monitor legislation and programmes relating to the national implementation of human rights treaties.

Mutual exchange of information with respect to general comments/recommendations

14. The meeting welcomed instances of information-sharing, including consultations among committees in the preparation of general comments/ recommendations. Collaboration could be further enhanced by establishing and each committee sharing their long-term programmes of work for the preparation of general comments.

Working methods

15. It was proposed to extend to all committees the practice adopted by some treaty bodies of including in their annual or session reports an overview of their working methods. It was further recommended that the Secretariat should provide updated information on the working methods of each treaty body.

Follow-up

16. Participants reaffirmed the recommendation of the second inter-committee meeting that all treaty bodies should consider introducing procedures to follow up their concluding observations or recommendations. Several committees had taken steps to introduce such procedures in the light of the procedures adopted by HRC. However, representatives of CEDAW and CRC explained that they had considered the matter and had decided, for the moment, not to introduce such procedures owing to their heavy workloads resulting from the backlog of States parties' reports awaiting review and other responsibilities. The organization (during 2003 and 2004) of workshops on follow-up to recommendations in treaty bodies' concluding observations was welcomed.

Non-reporting

17. The existing procedure, introduced by most treaty bodies, whereby the State party's implementation of a particular human rights treaty was considered in the absence of a report, was recognized as a useful tool to address non-reporting. In many cases, it provided sufficient motivation for the State in question to produce a report. Other solutions were explored with a view to reducing the number of States that did not report or that did so with considerable delay. The point was made that States that reported appeared to be at a disadvantage in comparison to non-reporting

States, because the former had to face public questioning by the treaty bodies regarding implementation of their obligations. Ways to ensure that reporting and non-reporting States both took on public accountability and to draw attention to the reporting practices of States parties were also discussed.

Reservations

18. It was agreed that it was appropriate for treaty bodies to request the withdrawal of reservations to the treaties they monitored. The question of whether the treaty bodies could decide on the admissibility of reservations made by States (and the legality of their provisions) was discussed. Participants stressed that although not all treaty bodies were confronted with this issue, it would be useful to adopt a common approach. It was proposed that the Secretariat should prepare a report (including a table showing all reservations made to the core human rights treaties and the nature of the provisions covered) with a view to establishing a working group, consisting of a representative of each committee, to consider this report and report to the next inter-committee meeting.

IV. Strengthening the human rights treaty body system: streamlining of reporting requirements

19. The meeting considered the report of the Secretariat presenting proposed guidelines on an expanded core document and treaty-specific targeted reports as well as harmonized guidelines for reporting to all treaty bodies (HRI/MC/2004/3), which had been requested by the second inter-committee meeting and fifteenth meeting of chairpersons. The Secretariat introduced the document, which had been produced as part of a collaborative effort involving members of the treaty bodies, States parties, parts of the United Nations system, NGOs and other parts of civil society, OHCHR — in particular its Treaties and Commission Branch — and the Division for the Advancement of Women as the secretariat of CEDAW. The proposed change of name of the "expanded core document" to "common core document" was intended to reinforce the linkage between the two documents which would be submitted in tandem to each treaty body, i.e. the common core document and the treaty-specific document.

Facilitating reporting by States

20. Participants agreed that the revised proposed reporting system should facilitate reporting, as well as implementation of States' substantive treaty obligations. It would not become clear whether the addition of congruent provisions to the common core document would achieve this aim until States began to test the format. The paragraphs relating to the establishment of an appropriate institutional framework for the preparation of reports (HRI/MC/2004/3, annex, paras. 12-15) were emphasized, as was the link between reporting and the monitoring of implementation of the treaties at the national level. The common core document could provide a tool in the overall attempt to make reporting more efficient and effective, but States parties needed to take their treaty obligations seriously, including their reporting obligations.

21. Among the diverse views expressed by participants was the concern that the guidelines might discourage States parties, both large and small, from reporting. It

was emphasized that States should be assisted to ensure that they had the capacity to report and that reporting requirements should not provide an excuse for not reporting and should not deter ratification of treaties.

Content of common core document and treaty-specific document

22. The basic structure and content of the proposed common core document were approved in principle, although further work on the draft was required and comments from treaty bodies should be sought. Some participants suggested additional requirements, including the disaggregation of data by age and the inclusion of the outcomes of special sessions of the General Assembly following up on specific world conferences. Should the concept of the common core document and treaty-specific document be agreed by the committees, an appropriate balance needed to be struck between the two documents to ensure that the reporting remained focused on the treaties rather than on the common core document.

23. A number of areas were identified as requiring further work. Information on the practical implementation of the human rights treaties, including examples, should be provided, rather than indicating whether the treaties were directly applicable, as should information on the laws regulating civil society, including NGOs, and the restrictions imposed on their activities. Participants suggested that additional provisions could usefully be included in the guidelines for the common core document that would require reporting on congruent provisions of the treaties. It was also suggested that further review and contributions from members of all committees were needed. The imposition of page limits and the approach to poorly presented reports were particular concerns. The inclusion of lists of treaties, world conferences and statistical information was welcomed as a useful guide for States, but also for other interested parties. Such lists should not be seen as exhaustive. The link between human rights and the Millennium Development Goals was seen as important. The chart of congruence (ibid., p. 9), although only intended as an indication of where congruence might lie, also required further work. It was suggested that all committees should standardize their technical terminology.

Testing the proposal

24. With the approval of the committees, it was agreed that testing the proposal through the preparation of a report based on the proposed guidelines would be important to gauge its efficacy and identify areas requiring further refinement.

Technical assistance and capacity-building

25. The provision of technical assistance to States was essential to ensure their capacity to fulfil reporting obligations. Capacity to report was closely linked to the capacity to implement the provisions of the treaties themselves. It was also important to ensure that the Secretariat had the necessary resources and capacity to provide technical assistance, in particular with regard to the proposed draft guidelines.

V. Dialogue with non-governmental organizations

26. The representatives of the following NGOs were present during the dialogue: Amnesty International, Association for the prevention of torture, Centre on Housing

Rights and Evictions, Human Rights Watch, International Catholic Migration Commission, International Commission of Jurists, International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, International Service for Human Rights, International Women's Rights Action Watch-Asia Pacific, People's Health Movement, Quaker United Nations Office and World Organization against Torture.

27. NGOs welcomed the invitation extended by the meeting to discuss the matters of mutual concern, and participants thanked NGOs for their valuable contributions to the work of treaty bodies and the promotion of national implementation of the human rights treaties. Several NGOs highlighted the impact on human rights of counter-terrorism measures, which they considered should be an important concern for all treaty bodies. They also recommended that the treaty bodies collaborate further with the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

28. The rights of women in prison and the rights of their children, human rights violations relating to sexual orientation, housing rights and violence against women were also raised as issues requiring further attention. There was also a need for wider adherence to CMW.

29. A number of NGOs addressed the working methods of the committees and the draft guidelines for an expanded core document and treaty-specific targeted report (HRI/MC/2004/3). Several raised concerns about the approach outlined in the report, whereas others welcomed the process of its formulation and looked forward to its further refinement and their involvement in that process.

30. The issue of non-reporting required further analysis and action on the part of the treaty bodies. States should not see the common core document and the treaty-specific report as excusing them from fulfilling their reporting obligations. Treaty bodies that did not have follow-up procedures were urged to consider adopting them. NGOs also requested that the scheduling of the examination of States parties' reports occur well before the sessions at which they would be considered in order to allow them to plan their work, in particular with respect to the preparation of shadow reports. Treaty bodies were also invited to schedule the briefings with NGOs during sessions, so as to allow for a better dialogue and for interpreters to be obtained.

VI. Points of agreement of the third inter-committee meeting to be transmitted to the sixteenth meeting of chairpersons

Mandate of the Chairperson

I. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that the Chairperson of the current inter-committee meeting should coordinate implementation of the present recommendations together with the chairpersons of the other treaty bodies and report on their implementation at the beginning of the next inter-committee meeting, before the election of the chairperson of that meeting.**

Inter-committee meeting

II. **The third inter-committee meeting noted that the convening of the inter-committee meeting had been generally welcomed and recommended that**

such meetings be convened on an annual basis. It also underlined the value of informal meetings of treaty bodies to discuss matters of mutual concern and recommended that such meetings be convened regularly.

Reporting guidelines

III. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that the Chairpersons forward the draft guidelines on an expanded core document and treaty-specific targeted reports (HRI/MC/2004/3) and the report of the inter-committee meeting to their respective committees for discussion as a priority item of their agenda.**

IV. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended the establishment of a mechanism for further consultations between the committees on the draft proposed guidelines and other matters relating to the harmonization of their reporting guidelines during the coming year. The meeting decided to entrust this task to Mr. Kamel Filali as rapporteur.**

V. **Bearing in mind the importance and complexity of the proposed guidelines, the third inter-committee meeting requested OHCHR, in consultation with the Division for the Advancement of Women, to continue to work on the draft proposed guidelines, incorporating the comments and suggestions made by each committee during the course of the year, as well as those received from NGOs, NHRIs and States parties, with a view to producing revised guidelines for consideration, if possible at the fourth inter-committee meeting, in 2005.**

States parties wishing to report using the draft guidelines

VI. **The third inter-committee meeting generally agreed that any States parties wishing to prepare reports using the draft guidelines should be entitled to do so and encouraged them to seek technical assistance from OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women, which were requested to provide technical assistance to States engaged in this process.**

Working methods

VII. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that each committee should include in its agenda for each session a specific item on working methods if it had not already done so. The secretariat of each committee was requested to produce a document detailing its working methods for inclusion in its annual report, or issued as a separate document.**

VIII. **The third inter-committee meeting requested OHCHR, in collaboration with the Division for the Advancement of Women, to produce a comparative report on the working methods of all committees, to be updated on a regular basis.**

IX. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that OHCHR, in collaboration with the Division for the Advancement of Women, submit a proposal to the fourth inter-committee meeting on the standardization of terminology used by treaty bodies relating to the technical elements of their work.**

List of issues

X. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that each committee, if it had not already done so, consider adopting the practice of producing a list of issues and questions to be submitted to States parties before the session at which the respective State party's report is to be considered by the Committee.**

Reference to concluding observations

XI. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that States parties should specifically address the steps taken to implement the Committee's concluding observations/recommendations in their periodic reports. Where this information is not included, it was recommended that committees request it in their list of issues for the State party.**

Follow-up

XII. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that each committee continue to consider adopting procedures to ensure effective follow-up to their concluding observations, taking into account the procedures that are already being implemented and their respective workloads.**

Liaison with specialized agencies and United Nations programmes and funds

XIII. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that each committee consider appointing a focal point to liaise with specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system to encourage their participation in its work. In particular, the committees should encourage United Nations bodies to provide country-specific input relating to the human rights situation in the State party under consideration.**

National human rights institutions

XIV. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that all committees strongly support the work of national human rights institutions and, where they did not exist, call on States to create them in accordance with the Paris Principles. The meeting encouraged national human rights institutions to participate in treaty body sessions, including by providing input to the work of the pre-sessional working groups, while maintaining their independence. National human rights institutions were also encouraged to play a role in providing early warning of cases of human rights violations and in following up on treaty body recommendations. The meeting recommended that a number of NHRIs be invited to the next inter-committee meeting.**

Non-reporting

XV. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that the Secretariat produce a comprehensive report highlighting the situation with regard to non-reporting by States parties and reports that are overdue.**

Reservations

XVI. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that the Secretariat prepare a report, including a table showing all reservations made to the core human rights treaties and the nature of the provisions covered, with a view to establishing a working group consisting of a representative of each committee to consider this report and to report to the next inter-committee meeting.**

Statistical information relating to human rights implementation

XVII. **The third inter-committee meeting requested the Secretariat to provide assistance to the treaty bodies in analysing statistical information relating to human rights presented in States parties' reports, replies to lists of issues and core documents.**

Interactive dialogue with the Commission on Human Rights

XVIII. **The third inter-committee meeting reiterated the recommendation of the second inter-committee meeting that the Commission on Human Rights set aside appropriate time for an interactive dialogue with the chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies during its annual session.**

Cooperation with special procedures mandate-holders

XIX. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that funds be made available to support the interaction of special procedures mandate-holders with the treaty bodies, including through attendance at sessions of treaty bodies.**

Press releases

XX. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that committees establish a liaison point with the Department of Public Information to ensure the accuracy of press releases.**

XXI. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that the press releases of each committee should include a disclaimer stating, "This press release is not an official record and is provided for public information only".**

Technical assistance and capacity-building

XXII. **The third inter-committee meeting recommended that technical assistance be provided to States, at their request, to enhance their capacity to meet their reporting obligations.**

Recommendations of the second inter-committee meeting

XXIII. **The third inter-committee meeting recalled the recommendations of the second inter-committee meeting and recommended that each committee continue to seek to implement those recommendations that remained outstanding.**